

REMARKS / ARGUMENTS

In complete response to the Office Action of May 31, 2005, on the above-identified application, reconsideration is respectfully requested. Claims 22 – 25 are pending in this application.

With this amendment, claim 22 is amended. Claims 24 and 25 have been withdrawn by the Examiner.

Claim Amendments:

Applicants respectfully request that these Amendments be entered, as Applicants believe doing so will place the claims in a condition of allowability. Additionally, Applicants assert that no new matter has been added with these amendments. Support for these amendments may be found in the specification, at page 3, lines 16 – 36.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 112:

Claim 22 currently stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, for failing to comply with the enablement requirement. Specifically, portion "a" of claim 22 is objected to for appearing to be a first step of the method of protecting the pieces, as opposed to an intended use of the process. Portion "a" has been amended to more clearly describe the intended use of the equipment, as opposed to reading as a first step of the method.

Claim 22 is also rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which is regarded as the invention. As before, portion "a" of claim 22 is objected to as indefinite for appearing to recite an intended use as an initial step in the method. As stated above, portion "a" has been amended to more clearly describe the intended use of the equipment, as opposed to reading as a first step of the method.

Due to the aforementioned amendment, the Applicants respectfully contend that the basis for this rejection deserves reconsideration.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102:

Claims 22 – 23 currently stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Bland et al. (US 2,895,747). The Applicants respectfully disagree that Bland '747 discloses each and every limitation of the instant application.

Specifically, Bland '747 discloses a joining piece welded to the interior of a piece of equipment ("welding a back-up ring to the inner surface of a first steel pipe" (see col 4, lines 21 - 22)), and applying a coating of aluminum to the equipment and joining piece **after the welding** ("coating said back-up ring and the inner surface of said first steel pipe with aluminum [presumably after said welding]" (see col 4, lines 36 – 32)).

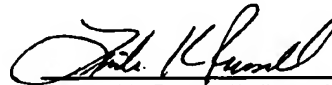
Bland '747 neither teaches nor discloses welding the pieces together **without interior welds** (i.e. with only external welds), or protecting the pieces of equipment and joining pieces with a protective coating **before the welding**. As such, Bland '747 fails to teach or disclose each and every limitation of the current invention. For this reason, the Applicants respectfully contend that this basis for rejection deserves reconsideration.

CONCLUSION

Accordingly, it is believed that the present application now stands in condition for allowance. Early notice to this effect is earnestly solicited. Should the Examiner believe a telephone call would expedite the prosecution of the application, he is invited to call the undersigned attorney at the number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: **August 31, 2005**

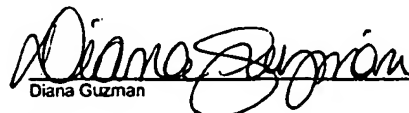


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I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service with sufficient postage as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450, on this 31st day of August, 2005.


Diana Guzman